

The Unfailing Fruitfulness of Fervent Effectual Prayer

by Jeremy James



The subject of prayer is one of the most beautiful we could discuss.

We could start in many places but the epistle by James offers what is possibly the simplest and most direct:

**“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.”
(James 4:8)**

What a glorious truth!

The principle behind it is enunciated in a most touching way in the book of Jeremiah:

**“Am I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off?”
(Jeremiah 23:23)**

The LORD God who created each and every person wants us to know that He is a Personal God, that He is knowable and accessible, and that He is not “afar off.” As the Apostle Paul says *He is not far from any of us* (Acts 17:27).

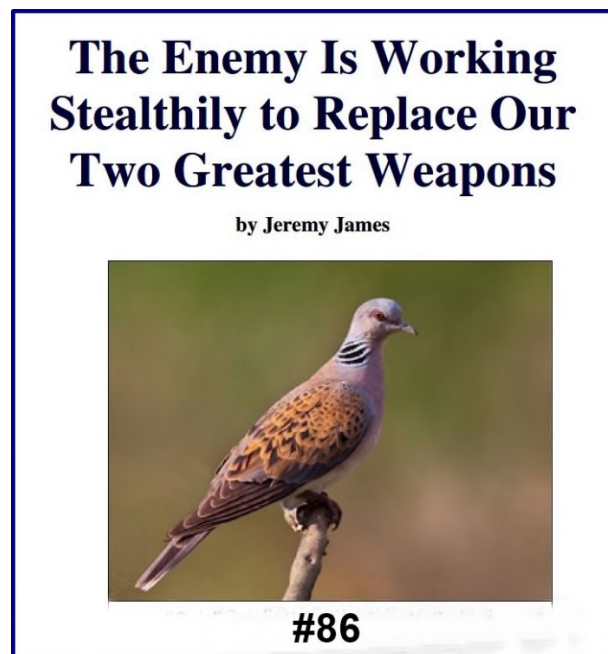
Fervent effectual prayer (James 5:16) rests on a firm understanding of this wonderful truth! God is outside of us and yet He is incredibly near.

The Enemy teaches the opposite, of course. Everyone in the New Age is made to believe that God is inside of us and yet incredibly far away – or utterly impersonal. In fact, the whole of human philosophy tries in various ways to blind us to the truth that God is both near and accessible to those who approach Him on His terms.

His terms require sinless perfection, but that's not something we possess. We can only draw near to Him through the blood of Jesus. This is something which the entire pagan world is unable to understand or accept. The Enemy has convinced fallen man that his good works and acts of kindness grant him a right to be heard by God – but they don't.

Without faith it is impossible to please Him! – Hebrews 11:6. Not just difficult, but impossible. And the faith in question is a faith in Jesus and what he did on our behalf on Calvary. It is a heartfelt acceptance that the blood of the Lamb, and it alone, has atoned for the sins of mankind and that it has done so in full.

The world resents the exclusive privilege that Christians claim to possess. How dare they assert that their path is the only one which provides access to God through prayer! It is enough that they claim that Christianity is the only path to God. This is the kind of alleged "intolerance" that will cause all who believe in Jesus Christ to face great animosity in the End Time.



Previous papers

In an earlier paper [#86] we described prayer as one of our two great weapons in the spiritual war against the powers of darkness. In it we said:

Prayer is the continual expression of our relationship with God. We speak with gratitude to our Father through prayer and bring before Him our needs and concerns, our joys and expectations, as well as our praise and celebration of His wonderful work, both in our own lives and in the lives of our family and fellow believers. Through prayer we glorify God.

Prayer is intrinsically personal, a sincere profession of our utter dependence upon God, our Father. It is a daily and hourly acknowledgment of His sovereign role in our lives, of the joy of our salvation, and of all that Christ, His Son, has achieved on our behalf. Through the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, we frame – in an attitude of repentance – the words that best express our thoughts and feelings and our desire to serve Him, to seek His holy will and to **“work out [our] own salvation with fear and trembling.”** (Philippians 2:12)

In the same paper we took a close look at seven common errors which by various means have crept into the church. These errors are:

1. Vain repetition, which the Bible condemns, applies only to ritualized prayers.
2. God hears all prayers.
3. God has a plan for our lives which cannot be influenced by our prayers.
4. There is little real difference between personal and impersonal prayer.
5. Prayer is more ‘successful’ when infused with imagination.
6. Some forms of prayer are more ‘advanced’ or ‘effective’ than others.
7. Prayer is most effective when we empty our mind.

We won’t go over these again in this paper, but readers may find it useful to consider afresh why each of these propositions is actually false. One or two may sound perfectly okay to some Christians, but they are all harmful.



The Enemy tries in various ways to make the Christian path appear complicated or demanding or perilously uncertain. He hates the security and peace that God’s infinite grace and mercy bring into a believer’s life. This is why his attacks on prayer – and a correct understanding of prayer – are a central pillar in his strategy.

The Prince of Peace

When a believer's daily prayers are as they ought to be, he draws nearer to God and finds in his life the joy and tranquility of his salvation. But when he has difficulty settling into prayer he loses that sense of communion with God. The still small voice seems much too still and much too small. It continues to speak to him, of course, but he is not sufficiently at peace with himself to discern its gentle guidance.

Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6) and all that he does in our lives is conducive to peace. However, as Isaiah states, there is no peace for the wicked (48:22 and 57:21). The Enemy hates peace and will sow discord and dissension wherever he can.

This is why believers who are grounded in a life of prayer all seem to have at least one notable characteristic – a steadfast inner peace. They lack the agitation that hovers like a swarm of tiny mosquitoes over the minds and hearts of so many professing Christians today.

As believers who trust in His Word they have a personal relationship with their Creator. A prayerful attitude permeates their lives. They truly know what Isaiah meant when he said:

**“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind
is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.”
(Isaiah 26:3)**

These believers protect their feet daily with the **“preparation of the gospel of peace” (Ephesian 6:15)**. The **“preparation”** in question is their conscious immersion each morning in the wonderful truth of the Gospel and the irrevocable promises of God. With such protection, like the shoes of badgers' skin mentioned by God in the book of Ezekiel, their walk with Christ is sweet indeed.

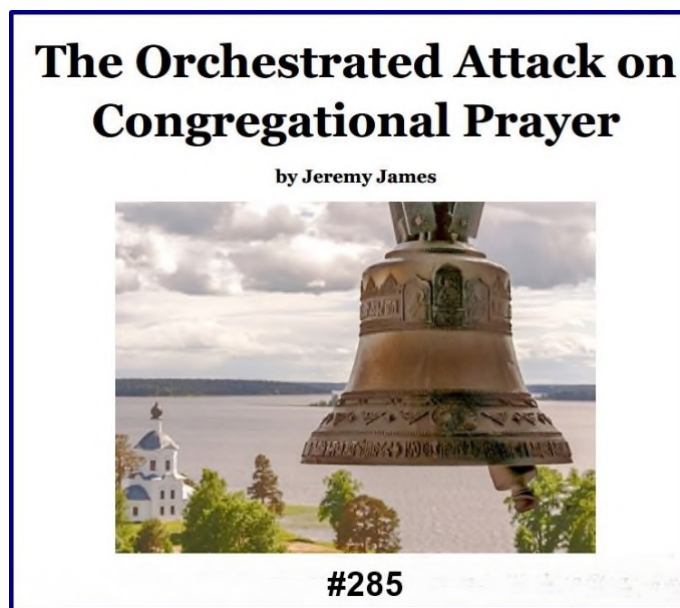


Bells taken from Russian churches after the 1917 revolution.

Melting the bells

Most of the time the servants of Satan try to conceal their bitter contempt for Christian prayer. They do this mainly to hide from Christians the extent to which their prayers impede, scatter and nullify the works of darkness.

History gave us a startling demonstration of this hatred when, for several years, the Marxists who carried out the Russian Revolution conducted a vicious campaign to suppress the most visible – and audible – symbol of Christian prayer, namely the great bronze bells which reverberated in churches and monasteries across the Empire. Satan let his mask slip as the Sabbatean-Frankist cult of apostate Judaism tore down these wonderful heralds of Christian prayer and worship.



If that awful revolution and the civil war which followed had been reported properly in the West, the world would have seen very clearly the role of Satanism in that bloody and protracted enterprise. It is notable that the demonised gang of thugs which murdered tens of millions of Russian Orthodox Christians between 1917 and 1953 also went to great lengths to suppress Christian prayer. As Satanists they knew how important it was to deprive their victims, as far as they could, of the glorious light of Christ which is found mainly through prayer.

The bells located across the vast territory of the Russian empire were both a call to prayer and a symbol of prayer. How the Satanists must have despised those bells, those massive vessels of bronze whose encouraging peals echoed daily for miles and miles across the landscape! Even the flocks in the fields would have heard their reassuring reminder that Christ has risen!

Here is how one commentator described the wicked scheme to remove every one of these bells and melt them down so that they could never be used again:

“Prior to the 1917 Revolution, more than a million bronze bells rang in churches, cathedrals and monasteries throughout the Russian Empire. After the October Revolution of 1917, church bells were especially despised by the new Bolshevik order. Bell ringing went against the party’s anti-religious [ideology]... and by the beginning of the 1930s all church bells had been silenced. Under Soviet law, all church buildings, as well as bells, were placed at the disposal of the Local Councils, which “based on state and public needs, used them at their own discretion.” In 1933, at a secret meeting of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, a plan for the procurement of bell bronze was initiated. Each republic and region received a quarterly quota for their respective procurement of bell bronze. Within a few years, in a well organized campaign, nearly everything which represented Orthodox Russia was destroyed.”

– Paul Gilbert, *When Holy Russia’s Bells Were Silenced*, 2019.

This destructive program was strangely foreshadowed at the time of the Reformation when, in their zeal to get rid of idols, many churches also got rid of their bells. How well this must have pleased the Enemy! A bell is not an idol but a simple device to summon parishioners to prayer. It had a straightforward practical purpose, especially at a time when few Christians had clocks or watches to regulate their daily activities.

We forget that the High Priest wore bells all around the hem of his blue ephod!



Golden bell found by archeologists in Jerusalem in 2011. They believe it either came from the ephod of the High Priest or was modelled on the bells sewn into his robe.

A small bead inside the bell, suspended from a tiny thread and only 4mm in diameter, acted like a clapper. It produced a sound by bouncing against the bell as the High Priest moved about. There were dozens of bells on his ephod, all producing a note believed to be B3 (240 Hz).



**Garments worn by the High Priest.
Note the row of alternating bells and pomegranates
sewn onto the hem of his ephod.**

Vernon McGee made an insightful study of the bells worn by the High Priest. Many teach that their sound indicated that he was still alive while inside the Holy of Holies but this makes no sense. He never wore the blue ephod while inside the Holy of Holies! The bells alternated with pomegranates around the rim of his ephod and were thus linked symbolically with the pomegranates. Pastor McGee taught (rightly in our opinion) that the bells represented the profession of ourselves before the world, while the pomegranates represented the fruit we were created to produce.

The bells of our spiritual life ring before the world whether we like it or not. As such, according to pastor McGee, we are all preachers, giving forth visible evidence of our spiritual life and our inner condition. We can't hide it:

"We are all preachers. We are preaching where we work, we're preaching where we go to school, we're preaching in our neighborhood. We're preaching all the time – it's like ringing a bell. We tell out to others all about ourselves."

He went on to say:

"We need to ring a bell; we need to let the world know today where we stand. My beloved, may I say that a weak view concerning the Word of God will not stand up in this hour in which we are living. You are either convinced the Bible is the Word of God or you have your doubts. If you have your doubts, you have no bell to ring today..."

“Personally I think testimonies have degenerated to the place where there is too much of personal experience – “I did this, I did that, and I did the other thing.” My friend, if you’ve been saved, it’s not because you did anything; it’s because *Christ* did it all. And the thing He did was to shed His blood that you might have forgiveness of sins. I say to you, that’s the bell that needs to be rung today. It needs to be sounded out among believers in a very definite way. You can’t make too much of the blood.”

The Deadly, Sweet-tasting Poison known as *Lectio Divina*

by Jeremy James



#80

In paper #80 we discussed one of the clever ways the Enemy is attacking two targets at once, the Word of God and effectual fervent prayer. Bible study is misrepresented by *Lectio Divina* as both a source of subjective truth and a way of entering a state of meditative prayer.

Luring believers away from fervent effectual prayer

When Zerubbabel set about rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem after the Exile in Babylon, the powers that were already established in the region were keen to sabotage his efforts. They began by claiming that they too were servants of the LORD God of Israel and should therefore be allowed to participate in the project:

“Then they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither.” (Ezra 4:2)

But Zerubbabel knew what they were up to:

“Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the LORD God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us.” (Ezra 4:3)

This is an old trick, where those who oppose the Word of God pretend to accept it and then proceed to mislead and confuse true believers. Of course, if we are discerning, this will never work, but for those who are not fully conversant with God’s Word, the risk remains.

Satan uses many devices to lure believers away from fervent effectual prayer. We have already examined many of these in previous papers but it helps to review them from time to time because they never go out of fashion. The Enemy continually moves them from shelf to shelf and even changes their labels in the knowledge that someone will come along, pick one up and say, *Hey, this looks interesting!*



Many purveyors of “new ways” to pray inveigle their audience with thoughts of “better results.” But there are no new ways to pray. And the idea that prayer is concerned in any respect with achieving “results” is simply false.

A Christian never prays to get results! Yes, we may come before our heavenly Father with our request or supplication, but we leave the matter entirely in His hands! Our attitude is very simple: Let Thy will be done. We know that whatever happens thereafter accords perfectly with His sovereign assessment of our needs.

Hannah

When Hannah poured out her heart before the LORD in Shiloh, she was greatly troubled. Barren and oppressed, weeping frequently and not eating, she struggled under a great burden of grief – the loss of the children she never had. And yet, after she gave all her concerns to the LORD, she underwent a change:

“So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad.” (1 Samuel 1:18)

Christians who use ‘techniques’ and ‘methods’ to commune with the LORD are unable to pray. They don’t understand what prayer is, but Hannah knew. She came before the LORD in her weakness and brokenness, with a contrite heart, trusting in His great mercy. And like the Psalmist she knew she was speaking to the great King over all the earth:

**“For the LORD most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth.”
(Psalm 47:2)**

Oh if only we would pray like Hannah!

The Word of God calls for this very attitude, this reverential disposition, when it exclaims – no fewer than four times in the same Psalm –

**“Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness,
and for his wonderful works to the children of men!”
(Psalm 107: 8,15,21,31)**

Jesus said that unless we become as little children, we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. In truth, it is only as little children that we can pray to our Father as we should.

Solomon gave us a glimpse of this attitude when, during his vision of God in a dream in Gibeon, he said:

**“And now, O LORD my God... I am but a little child:
I know not how to go out or come in.” (1 Kings 3:7)**

We all need a great bell to peal in our soul every time we kneel down to pray, a solemn reminder that we are but a little child coming before the Great King!

Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

CONCLUSION

Every one of our prayers brings a fresh blessing upon the earth. It cannot possibly be otherwise. We are asking our Father to remember what His Son did on Calvary and to bless the saints in his holy name. The Holy Ghost takes our words and puts them before our Father in a message woven with His holiness:

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” (Romans 8:26)

Meditation, contemplative prayer, imagination, and all the rest are useless counterfeits devised by the Enemy to keep us from true Christian prayer.

Effectual fervent prayer is unfailingly fruitful. It is our great privilege, in the time left to us, to produce this fruit, these wonderful pomegranates, and refresh those tired and weary souls whom the Enemy daily oppresses with his bitter lies and vile deceptions.

We'll close with the exhortation by Vernon McGee which we cited earlier:

My friend, if you've been saved, it's not because you did anything; it's because *Christ* did it all. And the thing He did was to shed His blood that you might have forgiveness of sins. I say to you, that's the bell that needs to be rung today. It needs to be sounded out among believers in a very definite way. You can't make too much of the blood."

Jeremy James
Ireland
May 5, 2023

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